

Week of August 12, 2002: MaineDOT Flash Facts
Topic: Aggressive Driving and Road Rage

Monday

What is aggressive driving?

It is risky driving behavior that includes actions such as:

Speeding, disregarding traffic signs or signals, tailgating, unsafe passing and weaving in and out of traffic.

How big of a problem is it in Maine?

Aggressive Driving behaviors:

- A factor in about 40% of the state's crashes.
- Cause more than half of all fatalities and serious injuries.

Is aggressive driving intentional?

-Sometimes. (But never should be)

-Often it is a result of other factors:

Poor scheduling (Results in excessive speed and other risk taking activities on the road.)

Alcohol and drugs (May lead to additional risk taking.)

Message:

Avoid Aggressive Driving:

- Each year in Maine, tens of thousands of aggressive drivers have crashes.
- One unexpected move by another vehicle, pedestrian or bicyclist can be devastating.
- Use turn signals.
- Leave adequate following distance.
- Avoid abrupt turns and stops.
- Stay with the traffic flow.
- Leave an extra cushion of time when traveling.
- Focus on the driving task, and avoid distractions.

Be a Road Model - for yourself and your neighbors on the road.

Wednesday

What is Road Rage?

The uncontrolled anger of driver(s) resulting in intentional violence or threats. (A criminal behavior)

What leads to Road Rage?

- Anger, stress or self imposed schedule (often set off before the driver actually started their trip)
- Emotions overtake ability to reason (and anger quickly escalates)
- Taking the actions of others on the road personally.

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Driving can be personal, but in a positive sense. Remember:

- People are driving in the other vehicles (that have families and friends)
- Driving is a cooperative activity (between you and other motorists.)
- Other drivers may seem personally detached from you (since they are inside another vehicle- but treat them as you would in a more personal setting)

All of us make mistakes, even on the road.

- Recognize that the improper action by another was not personal
- If you made the on-road error, indicate an apology (to the other driver-if it is safe and easy to do so).
 - Tolerate potential shortcomings of other drivers (such as):
 - Young-their inexperience
 - Elderly-diminishing driver skills

Friday

Tips to Avoid Road Rage

Check your own driving barometer: (Do not let your emotions ruin good driving behavior)

- Check your emotions at the car door. (Start the ignition only after you have put the day's anger and frustrations aside)
- Be substance free (alcohol and drug)
- Quickly nip tell-tale indications of anger behind the wheel. (Is your temper being shown through the car's accelerator or by other risky behaviors?)
- Avoid feeling pressured by a time schedule. (If you're running late, realize that you will arrive late, but keep safety the top priority.)
- Maintain safe following distances so you have adequate time to react.

Prevent Road Rage Events:

- Do not over-react (Do not take poor driving decisions made by others personally.)
- Avoid making driving mistakes yourself (make smooth, safe road maneuvers to avoid upsetting other road users.)
- Avoid eye contact with drivers who are demonstrating signs of anger.
- Do not make gestures of anger to other road users.
- Never tail gate.
- Do not block lanes that others want to use. (passing lanes, right turn lanes)
- Use horn only when really needed (to warn others of impending danger).
- If you witness road rage, have your passenger phone authorities (or pull off to a safe location to call in the information.)

Be a Road Model (for everyone's sake)